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ABSTRACT

This document reports on a conference which focused on problems of higher education in British Commonwealth countries. Conference participants were representatives from various educational institutions in Commonwealth countries, and their presentations covered such issues as: international cooperation relating to staff and student exchange and mobility; the need for universities to adapt their programs and methods to constraints on public expenditures; resource sharing; the use of new technology in distance education and practical problems of countries with limited resources; crisis of higher education in Africa; and increased costs for higher education in Britain and other Commonwealth countries and its effect on students pursuing studies in those countries. Summaries of conference presentations are offered under the following headings: "Sharing between Equals--Slogan or Reality?"; "The Nature of the Crisis"; "Current Challenges" (focusing on India, The Commonwealth of Learning, and Nigeria); "Patterns of Staff and Student Interchange"; "Partnerships and Technology in Academic Learning"; "Problems and Possibilities of New Partnerships" (focusing on Australia and Zambia); "The Conference: An Overview"; and "Looking to the Future." A list of conference participants and their affiliations is included. (LPT)

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A ST CATHARINE'S CONFERENCE HELD AT CUMBERLAND LODGE JUNE 1989

St Catharine's Conference Report No. 17

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Introduction

St Catharine's Conferences are an important part of the work of the King George VI and Queen Elizabeth Foundation of St Catharine's. Six such conferences, focusing on a variety of contemporary issues, are held each year. Participation is by invitation and is intended to bring together people representative of a range of interest groups and of society in general.

This conference was concerned with some of the problems of higher education in the Commonwealth. Funding is at the root of many: as education becomes more technologically orientated, costs are escalating. Among the issues explored were the potential for increased and varied forms of co-operation; new structures in higher education and non-governmental initiatives; future trends in academic exchange (staff and students); developing a greater responsiveness to local environments—physical and cultural; the use of new technology, particularly in distance learning; and new forms of co-operation in higher education, within countries as well as at the international level.

The conference was addressed by:—

Lewis Perinbam, Vice-President, Canadian International Development Agency

Kenneth King, Reader in African Studies, Edinburgh University

Kamalini Bhansali, Vice-Chancellor, Shreemati Nathibai Damodar Thackersey Women's University, Bombay

James Maraj, President, Commonwealth of Learning, Vancouver

Yahaya Hamza, Director General, Federal Ministry of Education, Nigeria

Peter Williams, Director, Education Programme, Commonwealth Secretariat

Judy Roberts, Director, North Eastern Regional Co-ordinating Centre, Contact North, Ontario

Anastasios Christodoulou, Secretary General, Association of Commonwealth Universities

Kenneth Back, Director, International Development Programme of Australian Colleges

Ben Mweene, Director, Higher Educational Planning, Research and Development, Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Technology, Lusaka

Gowher Rizvi, Pro-Director and Beit Fellow in Commonwealth Studies, Oxford

Alister McIntyre, Vice-Chancellor, University of the West Indies, was the Conference President.

In his address of welcome, **Tim Slack**, the Principal of St Catharine's Foundation, expressed his thanks for generous donations by the **Canadian International Development Agency** as well as the **Delfont Trust** and the **British Council** towards the cost of the conference.

Summary

In the course of the conference it became increasingly clear that a major consideration for institutes of higher education in all Commonwealth countries is to ensure optimal exploitation of existing resources.

This might consist in redistributing the funds available to different uses (for example cutting down on welfare expenditure), utilising the existing infrastructure to full capacity by expanding the time in which it is actually being used, or making courses accessible to a greater number of students through distance education techniques.

Contributors tackled the problem of the possibility of genuine equality between partners of varied economic strength; various modes of international co-operation, such as staff and student mobility and the sharing of teaching material; the possibilities of distance education; and practical problems arising in countries with very limited resources.

However, several speakers drew attention to the success which had been achieved, for example in India, in spite of very limited resources.

Sharing between Equals—Slogan or Reality?

Education has provided the intellectual and spiritual framework for the evolution of the Commonwealth, said **Lewis Perinbam**. It has contributed to creating many Commonwealth institutions, such as parliamentary government and the principle of an independent judiciary. It has fostered values such as respect for the law and personal freedoms. Many of the Commonwealth leaders were the products of a combination of British education and their own national heritage.

And yet, despite its accomplishments, education in the Commonwealth has often encouraged attitudes of racial superiority and discrimination against minorities, the disadvantaged, women and others. Many grew up in an empire founded on the notion of the superiority of the British over their subject peoples and the assumption that all knowledge came from Britain. Education made its subject peoples ashamed of their traditions and their ways of life and was designed to create clerks for minor duties and to ensure subservience.

Long before Britain was known, mature civilizations flourished in Asia and Africa. Societies existed which enjoyed well-developed standards of living, which had town-planning, had public baths, and used metal coins. European colonial powers extinguished centralized states and kingdoms in Africa, as Britain destroyed the industrial economy of India.

The greatest damage done by education during the period of the Empire was the humiliation of its subject peoples, robbing them of their self-respect. Since then, one of the most important contributions which education has made in the Commonwealth has been to restore a sense of respect among peoples, especially those once subject to colonialism. It has also played a very important rôle in bridging societies of different backgrounds, traditions and cultural values.

The Commonwealth has created problems, but also great opportunities. Tremendous progress has taken place in economic terms. Economic conditions all over the Commonwealth are improving; life expectancy has doubled; infant mortality rates have decreased. For the first time in history, there are in the world more literate than illiterate people.

Education, training and research are a central element in Commonwealth development

The Commonwealth represents a community of nations working together in many fields. The human strands which bind it are its main strength, to which institutions like colleges and universities contribute by fostering collaboration at personal, professional and institutional levels. Education, training, and research therefore continue to be a distinctive and central element in Commonwealth development.

Over and above inequality of material and financial resources the asymmetry of the relationship must be overcome, and a genuinely polycentric and broad association of partners must be aimed for. An example of this kind of partnership is The Commonwealth of Learning, founded on the central idea that any learner anywhere in the Commonwealth should be able to study through any distance teaching programme available from any bona fide college or university in the Commonwealth.

Student mobility continues to be a growing concern in Commonwealth educational co-operation. Historically, it was centred in Britain, but now, quite properly, students are moving to all parts of the Commonwealth. Such mobility enriches not only the students, but also the institutions and the countries to which they go.

While the numbers of Commonwealth students are growing in some countries, such as India, they are in serious decline elsewhere. This is in stark contrast to the situation in many countries outside the Commonwealth, notably the Soviet Union, the Eastern European countries and the USA which attract large numbers of Commonwealth students.

If the trend of decreasing student mobility within the Commonwealth countries as a whole is not reversed, the Commonwealth will lose one of the most precious human elements that bind it, namely young people and the experiences they acquire through exchanges.

Throughout the Commonwealth, indeed throughout the world, universities are in crisis. The traditional rôle of the university and its relevance in today's society are in question. Yet the university has never been more important than it is today.

However, today's society does not tolerate the luxury of knowledge for its own sake. It demands that

knowledge be applied to its service. The university can bring the benefits of science and technology to the world's people, and help to build the human infrastructure for modern states in ways which respect cultural traditions and social values. This will require more inter-disciplinary and inter-professional studies.

If universities accept this, they will regain their position of influence. They are needed for their ideas and imagination. They can be in the forefront of the new interdependent society of the future; but they can no longer be satisfied with imparting knowledge alone, they also have to prepare new generations for social responsibility in ways in which they have rarely dared to do. At the same time, they will be called upon increasingly to be constructive and fearless critics of governments.

We have to restore confidence in our educational institutions as an integral part of our future and not as a luxury. Education must be restored to its place of priority on our national agendas ahead of military budgets and luxury imports.

It is vital to put the whole concept of sharing between equals into reality

These changes are taking place, but at an appallingly slow rate. One has to be aware that some of the greatest problems reside within the institutions themselves. Bureaucrats in governments, in educational institutions and development agencies are often obstacles to change and to progress itself.

It is vital to put the whole concept of sharing between equals into reality. It will lay the foundations for education systems that can move our civilization forward in ways no previous age has done.

► A main topic of the discussion was the question of how there could be equality between developed and developing countries as long as the attitude prevalent in the rich countries still was that the relationship consisted of aid programmes. The pattern, which is often automatically assumed, of one partner giving money (and teaching) and another partner receiving money (and learning) hinders genuine exchange. Efforts are being made to get away from the idea of aid so as to move towards relationships which are not patronizing, for example by decentralizing scholarship programmes.

There was some discussion on the rôle of the university in today's society. It was argued that while the university's concern has traditionally been with imparting knowledge for its own sake, serving society in practical terms is the only way in which it can retain its place on national agendas which have to accommodate many other urgent issues. Education must no longer be perceived as a luxury, but as rendering a useful service to the society which provides its funding.

Universities are capable of innovation and must be flexible enough to instigate innovative schemes. An example quoted was the University of Calgary, which has established a partnership with the University of Nepal and now gives degrees of medicine which are tenable only in Nepal. It can thus offer a course tailored to the specific needs of Nepal, whilst counteracting the tendency for qualified professionals to leave their country of origin.

It was pointed out that students coming to Britain for postgraduate studies often carried out research on topics related to their home countries. Could such research not be done more effectively in the relevant countries? From a teaching point of view, a British-based topic would be preferable, as it could be more thoroughly researched and supervised.

The Nature of the Crisis

Kenneth King focussed on the crisis of higher education as manifested in Africa. The notion that higher education in developing countries was facing a crisis, he said, did not become apparent until 1984. In that year the World Bank began to publish papers which attempted to define and analyse the crisis of Third World universities. Earlier publications either by the World Bank or by others had not mentioned that crisis, or not with the same urgency.

Ken King concentrated on a paper published by the World Bank in 1988 on African higher education, Education in Sub-Saharan Africa[1], making an assessment of the accuracy of the analysis, and how the crisis related to conventional forms of aid like linkages, staff development, and overseas student training. Although there is no reliable database, four main problems of African tertiary education were identified:

The first problem is the **over-production of graduates**. Manpower planning is hard to assess correctly, but the World Bank speaks of overproduction, wrong mixes of graduates with too many arts and social science graduates and too few scientists.

Despite the high production of graduates, the universities themselves do not develop. The withering and stagnation of research in the universities are seen as evidence of the damage inflicted on the universities' capacity to reproduce themselves.

[1]World Bank, *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa; Policies for Adjustment, Revitalisation and Expansion* (Washington, 1988).

The second problem is **low quality**. In the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), an examination set in the USA and taken by large numbers of overseas students, scores for Africans are lower than for Asians and Latin Americans. As GRE is an admission exam to universities, its validity in the context of higher education may not be absolute. External examiners in Africa claim generally to observe no noticeable difference in quality in the subjects they have been examining over the past four or five years. There is, however, a low, and possibly declining, standard right across Africa due to the shortage of textbooks and teaching materials. Evidence, mainly anecdotal, shows the devastating effect of this shortage in the African university environment:

> *"Chemists who have not done a titration; biologists who have not done a disection; physicists who have never measured an electrical current; secondary science teachers who have never witnessed, let alone themselves actually conducted the demonstrations central to the curriculum they teach; agronomists who have never conducted a field trial of any sort; engineers who have never disassembled the machinery they are called upon to operate; social scientists of all types who have never collected or conducted an analysis of their own empirical data; specialists for whom the programming and use of computers is essential who have never sat before or tested a programme on a functioning machine; lawyers who do not have access to recent judicial opinions; medical doctors whose only knowledge of laboratory test procedures is from hearing them described in a lecture hall—qualitatively deprived graduates such as these are now appearing in countries that have been hardest hit by the scarcity of non-salary inputs."*[1]

The result of this is that the stock of high level skills and the ability to generate knowledge and innovations in Sub-Saharan Africa is falling further and further behind despite the increasing numbers of graduates.

Thirdly, there is the problem of **high costs**. From the mid 1980s it became widely noticed that the unit cost of African higher education is seven times higher than in Asia, and nine times higher than in Latin America, that one student in Africa at the higher education level costs 60 times as much as one at a primary school, that staff subsidies on housing and health are very heavy, and that student-staff ratios are almost the lowest in the world. In Nigeria there were 57,000 non-teaching and other staff as compared to 70,000 students in 1981.

The fourth problem is **inequity and inefficient finance**. The high degree of subsidisation of students in African universities from the public purse means that as they are increasingly from middle class backgrounds, so that the poor are subsidising the rich, or as the report puts it, the rich are getting richer, and the poor are getting poorer. There are no data in this report on the proportions of poor or less poor—an area in which basic research is urgently needed.

These four problem areas are the essence of the World Bank's analysis not only of Africa, but in different ways also of Latin America.

The Bank suggests three measures to save money—to constrain numbers to combat over-production, expand cost-sharing and reduce costs by increasing efficiency—and a fourth, which will cost money, namely to enhance quality. The Bank says very clearly that in Sub-Saharan Africa implementation of policies to achieve the first three objectives will be essential to free the resources needed to achieve the fourth.

The problem of the cost and quality of higher education is not only being discussed in the World Bank, but also in countries like Kenya and Zambia, where academics and policy makers have proposed similar plans regarding boarding and feeding, student loan schemes, fees for tuition, educational facilities and equipment and improvements in general administration and professional services.

Projects with these objectives are already under way in many parts of Africa and in countries which have not signed up with the IMF or the World Bank. It is a very problematic agenda, because it involves the dismantling of a whole system, right or wrong, in which higher education was extremely highly subsidized. The motivation to go to school at all in some families may actually be the higher education subsidy, which is the reward for getting through secondary school successfully. Once that has been removed, the motivation for attending primary school may be weakened, particularly amongst poor families.

► Analyses of this crisis had indeed been undertaken in the 1970s, it was argued in discussion. However, the earlier authors had been much more hesitant in their recommendations than the World Bank, particularly concerning the introduction of fees for students, which they felt would restrict access for the poor. Generally there is a danger that donors might impose their own perceptions and standards on indigenous systems without fully understanding the consequences of the changes they suggest.

The World Bank's involvement in higher education has gone through various phases, developing towards ever more profound influence; the stages of this development might be described by the keywords Projects – Programmes – Policy.

One problem of outside aid in the 1960s and 1970s was that very often programmes did not continue

[1] *Education in Sub-Saharan Africa*, p.75.

long enough. A faculty or a twinning scheme might be set up, and after a few years the aid agency would withdraw, leaving schemes with insufficient support to carry on. Future programmes will have to take this into account.

Can academic quality be assessed on the basis of publication rates?

It was questioned whether academic quality should or indeed could be assessed on the basis of publication rates, which were not increasing and might even be decreasing in African universities. It was also pointed out that the financial situation of academics in African countries was such that they might find themselves forced to work in consultancies, private practices, etc., in order to supplement their income, which would leave them little or no time for research.

Current Challenges

In this panel session three different approaches to the challenges facing higher education in different parts of the Commonwealth were presented.

India

Kamalini Bhansali explained that India has the third largest educational system after USA and USSR with 180 universities, 6,000 colleges, 200,000 faculty members and a student population of 3.5 million. Every year 150 new colleges are established, so India may well have the largest higher educational system by the end of the century.

In 1986 the Government published the document *Challenge of Education—a Policy Perspective*, surveying the country's educational scene and suggesting steps to formulate a new education policy. It was followed by a second document, *Programme of Action*, indicating strategies for implementing the policies outlined in the previous one, covering the span of 25 years and the different stages of the educational ladder from childhood to adulthood.

The spectrum includes elementary education, vocationalisation of education, teacher training, development in science and technology, non-formal education, distance education, women's empowerment (for the first time an entire chapter is devoted to equality, highlighting the empowerment of women at different stages in their lives and in their careers), backward classes, special groups, institutional co-operation, sport, culture, etc.

Within this framework, and bearing in mind that developing countries face problems of poverty, illiteracy, employment, and technological development (problems which deepen when women are concerned), Kamalini Bhansali concentrated on some of the main challenges.

1. Structure. A variety of structures and academic programmes have long been characteristic of the Indian higher educational system, e.g. the single faculty, the multiple faculty, the affiliating type, the teaching type, universities catering for special subjects like Sanskrit, agricultural, technological universities, women's universities (five in all), and open universities.

Further to these, the University Grants Committee (UGC) instigated new structures like centres of advanced studies, autonomous colleges, and academic staff colleges, as well as provision for co-operation between institutions through library information centres, educational media resource centres. The Academic Link Exchange Scheme organises links between universities in India and Britain and other European countries. In addition, the UGC has recently set up autonomous Inter-University Centres, one for Nuclear Science, and one for Astronomy and Astrophysics, within the campuses of two universities.

New management structures in higher education need to be developed to bring together responsibilities which are at present shared by a number of agencies.

2. Responsiveness to local environment and special needs. Various distance education programmes have been developed, and there are now four open universities, of which the Indira Gandhi National Open University is an associate of The Commonwealth of Learning. Half of the universities offer correspondence programmes. More than one third of enrolments are in this open system.

In addition to teaching and research, universities have taken on the task of non-formal education, i.e. adult and continuing education. Students are involved in the process of reducing illiteracy in India, where the literacy rate is only 36% (24% among women).

3. Funding strategies. Indian higher education is heavily subsidized, but now new modes of funding will need to be explored. At present, endowments given for research have a 100% tax relief, which should be extended to general donations towards higher education. The long-term aim is to establish links between universities and industry.

4. New forms of co-operation. The Department of Woman and Child Development in the Ministry of Human Resource Development devised a long-term overall policy through the National Perspective Plan for Women: 1988 to 2000 AD, to enable Indian women, particularly rural women, to become integrated in the mainstream of the economy. Universities, and particularly women's universities,

have accepted their part in this, i.e. they have to be concerned not only with teaching at higher level and research, but also with contributing to the developmental process, reaching out to women at grassroot level; many universities have taken up special projects in rural areas.

Kamalini Bhansali ended by giving a successful example of the new type of relationship in a programme by the ACU and CIDA, preparing women administrators for key positions in institutions in the Commonwealth. Two workshops were held, with participants from developing countries and trainers equally from developing and developed countries, replacing patronage with partnership.

The Commonwealth of Learning

A major stimulus in the creation of The Commonwealth of Learning, suggested **James Maraj**, was the introduction of economic fees in Britain and other Commonwealth countries, which led to a reduction in the number of students from the developing countries pursuing higher education in those countries to which they had traditionally gone.

Despite concerted efforts no headway was made on the fees issue and alternatives had to be examined. In some instances a few overseas students found openings in non-Commonwealth countries, but this did not compensate for the large numbers who needed access to higher education.

Commonwealth Heads of Government, recognizing the constraints on the mobility of students, requested the Commonwealth Secretary-General to explore ways in which the problem could at least be alleviated. The way forward pointed to distance education: If the students could not go overseas, could the courses be brought to them? That was the question.

In choosing the pathway of distance education the basic premise was that there exists in the Commonwealth, as a whole, a considerable amount of materials, experience and expertise, which, if mobilized, could perhaps result in increasing access and improving the quality of education.

It was against this background that Commonwealth Heads of Government decided to create The Commonwealth of Learning. It would be wrong to regard its emergence as a substitute for access to conventional higher education. Rather it should be seen much more as a complement to traditional systems. In any event, because of resource limitations everywhere, conventional systems cannot be significantly expanded and distance education was seen as having a useful rôle to play, both by itself and in tandem with the conventional institutions.

As it has evolved, The Commonwealth of Learning is concerned with the development of human resources using distance education techniques. It is not *per se* a higher education institution and although a substantial part of its work will be concerned with the tertiary sector, it will operate in other sectors as well as it seeks to respond to specific needs in individual countries. Human resources development is not the prerogative of institutions of higher education.

The organisation will not only be concerned with programmes leading to credentials but will also sponsor activities relating to retraining and updating. In this regard, it will work closely with professional bodies and other agencies.

The Commonwealth of Learning has no preconceived ideas about what form its programmes should take. The Board of Governors has indicated that priority areas could well be business studies, agriculture and rural development, science and mathematics education. In addition it will respond to demands as these emerge and will be guided by the priorities established by individual countries or regions.

> *There will be increased demands for mass higher education*

As an important first step, The Commonwealth of Learning considers it necessary to create a database through which courses can be identified which are available by distance throughout the Commonwealth. A country or institution wishing to introduce a particular programme could be advised on what course exists and, after reviewing samples, would be in a position to determine whether they wish to have access to the materials. The Commonwealth of Learning would then negotiate for such materials which the country can use as it is or can modify and adapt. Where no suitable courses exist, The Commonwealth of Learning may commission new materials.

As the organisation has become operational, it is evident that although there is a wealth of material, getting access to it is fraught with difficulties. This is partly caused by the well known problems associated with copyright and by new restrictions deriving from such concepts as 'intellectual property'.

In addition, within more recent times, educational materials have come to be seen as a lucrative commodity. The cost of such material can be prohibitive for many developing countries, and even when aid is provided, sometimes the conditions attached to the use of such material makes it difficult for developing countries actually to make use of it.

In commenting on the funding of the new institution which is the first Commonwealth organisation to be based outside London, James Maraj noted that the developing countries have led the way with major pledges from Brunei (£3 million), Nigeria (£1.5 million) and India (£1 million). Canada, which hosts the organisation, has pledged some £6 million including substantial contributions from the Province of British Columbia and the Department of Communications. In the case of Britain, a pledge of £2 million over five years has been made. This is tied to the International Centre for Distance Learning at The Open University and is restricted to information services. Australia has pledged £1 million to be spent on projects in the South Pacific and Southern Africa. These projects must be designed jointly by Australian International Development Assistance Bureau and The Commonwealth of Learning. Smaller but significant contributions have also been made by the smaller Commonwealth countries.

Whereas in an earlier period access to higher education was seen as promoting upward social mobility, it is now evident that in terms of employability alone, there will be increased demands for mass higher education. Distance education has a major rôle to play in providing a response.

Nigeria

Alhaji Yahaya Hamza spoke about the situation of the 30 universities, 29 polytechnics and 38 colleges of education which form Nigeria's higher education system; some are run by the federal government and some by the state governments, but they all face the same basic problems.

Lack of money is at the root of these problems, which are felt in all African countries, but perhaps particularly painfully in Nigeria, which has become impoverished after a period of great wealth. Financial problems affect infrastructure, welfare programmes and staff development.

Providing the infrastructure is high on the list of priorities of any African institution. For example, they need to provide their own water supplies and to have a standby electricity system because the public supply is unreliable. They also have to provide academic buildings, housing for staff, and dormitories. In every Nigerian university are abandoned projects: lecture theatres, laboratories and new dormitory blocks were begun and then abandoned as the money ran out.

When a laboratory has been turned into a lecture room . . . obviously the quality of teaching is threatened

Now it has become necessary to restructure universities and colleges, and spending on 'non-essential' welfare is among the first items to be cut. Students, who used to be provided with three meals a day by the university now have to buy food in a cafeteria run by outside caterers. Dormitory facilities may well have to be cut too, as the institutions cannot maintain them and they are causing health problems. There are schemes now for private developers to build student villages near the campuses.

The major problems affecting the actual academic work concern equipment and staff development. All equipment needed by the engineering disciplines and the sciences has to be imported, placing a severe constraint on the funds available.

The more important concern, however, is staff development. Sending a university lecturer to Britain for training costs at least 150,000 Naira (£13,200) per year. His initial salary is not likely to be more than 10,000 Naira (£880): in other words, he is unlikely to earn throughout his working life enough to equal the amount spent on his training. Although Britain has been very helpful with a number of bilateral agreements arranging the training of university staff and staff exchanges, the situation is still difficult.

Nigeria will now have to turn to other areas as its major source of staff training. Staff exchanges should be developed within the South, and indeed the developing areas of the Commonwealth can only gain from improved links between South and South, and South and North, as well as between North and North.

Books and periodicals are also problematical. It is not unheard of to find university libraries with key journals three years out of date. On such a basis, research is difficult. Lectures have to be used for conveying the kind of information which should be available in libraries.

When a laboratory has been turned into a lecture room, where students doing chemistry and physics only look at demonstrations done by lecturers and technicians and do not have the opportunity of really getting to grips with experiments themselves, obviously the quality of teaching is threatened. This is happening in most African countries.

Nigeria has reached a stage now when the National University Commission which co-ordinates responsibilities for university education must establish procedures for accrediting programmes in universities, defining the essential number of teachers, the number of laboratories, the number of periodicals etc.

This is a challenge to all Commonwealth countries, and something can be done about it. There is room

for increasing student mobility, which has been dwindling over the past few years.

The Commonwealth of Learning, if supported properly, can help the universities in developing countries with good curriculum development and giving students access to what is available elsewhere.

> *University administration is becoming a discipline of its own.*

Today a professor does not have the expertise which is required to run a university as a Vice-Chancellor. University administration is becoming a discipline of its own, needing training in resource management. Academics should concentrate on teaching and research. In some countries this approach creates problems because the post of Vice-Chancellor is seen as a prestigious post for an academic, and there is great resistance to the idea of having a mere manager giving a professor instructions.

The issue of resource management is one in which the developed should help the developing countries, as it is becoming more and more important. Nigeria, like other countries, just cannot make more money available for higher education, because it does not have the money.

Even if the money were available, after years of concentrating on funding for the tertiary sector the time has come to spend more money on the primary and the secondary sector. This not only is necessary to ensure a sound base for the tertiary level, but it is also a question of social justice, as the primary level provides the greatest overall social benefit.

► Discussion concentrated on the Commonwealth of Learning.

It was made clear that concern over possible lowering of standards due to the widening of access by distance education was misplaced. Although pre-university education is in a bad state in some parts of the Commonwealth, in many countries there are more people qualified for higher education than places available.

By the same token, the introduction of distance education on a large scale will not foster rivalry between conventional universities and The Commonwealth of Learning. On the contrary, experience in Canada has shown that distance techniques often reach students who would not otherwise have been attracted to the higher education system but at a later stage carry on at a campus university.

In the long term The Commonwealth of Learning should create a situation in which students are much more mobile than at present because they are connecting into a multinational system which will be recognized by all universities within the Commonwealth.

Patterns of Student and Staff Interchange

There is a close relationship between interchange of students and staff and development of higher education institutions abroad, said **Peter Williams**. Much Commonwealth student mobility has been orientated towards staff development, especially at postgraduate level. Of the nearly 12,000 graduates studying under the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan, more than half are now on senior staff appointments in higher education—a successful example of student mobility being an engine for institutional development in the countries the students came from.

At one time it was thought that study abroad was a temporary solution until the developing countries had reached self-sufficiency. Since then, the number of students studying overseas has multiplied, regardless of the factor of self-sufficiency.

This is not only because many countries have expanded the secondary sector, producing a greater number of people qualified for tertiary education, and thus increasing the demand for university places, but also because study abroad carries prestige, not necessarily justified by the quality of the institution in question. The host countries, too, benefit from the presence of foreign students. Universities will specialize in certain fields and thereby attract students from other countries. Research is becoming more and more international.

> *The situation of student exchange within the Commonwealth gives no reason for enthusiasm*

However, the actual situation of student exchange within the Commonwealth gives no reason for enthusiasm.

- Of the 1–1.2 million students from all countries currently studying abroad, only 65,000 exchange within the Commonwealth; of these, 29,000 go to the UK, 15,000 to Canada, 12,000 to Australia, 5,000 to India, and 2,000 to New Zealand. More Commonwealth students go to the USA than to other Commonwealth countries.

- Within the Commonwealth the patterns are highly unbalanced. More than half of the mobility consists of students from Malaysia and Hong Kong going to Britain, Canada, and Australia.
- Following Britain's example, Australia and New Zealand are now about to charge students from abroad full-cost fees, as some Canadian provinces do. Virtually every Commonwealth country, with the exception of India, charges higher rates for students from abroad than for home students.

It is very rare that a student from a genuinely poor family studies in Britain. This is inevitable when one considers the cost not only of the high fees, but also of the travel and the living expenses. In practical (though not in psychological) terms, the latter are as significant as the high fees.

Despite the imposition of full-cost fees numbers of overseas students in British universities have gone up. A higher percentage now comes from countries in the European community, whose students only pay the home fee. By now universities have become dependent on the income from the fees, so they no longer oppose them.

Although institutional similarities, shared history and the English language would seem to make student exchanges within the Commonwealth singularly appropriate, it is fairly limited compared to the lively exchange elsewhere.

This may be because of the nature of the Commonwealth and its composition of richer and poorer countries—there are few middle income countries with well developed higher education systems. It may also have its roots in the nature of the colonial relationship. (Interestingly, students from former French dependencies like Reunion and Martinique, which are departments of France, pay home fees in Britain.) Despite the institutional similarities, there are no systematic arrangements for establishing equivalences or academic credit transfer: as their structures and patterns diverge over time, this could impede mobility.

As for staff exchange, it is nothing unusual for a country to build up its higher education system with imported staff. Most Commonwealth countries, including Canada and Australia, have done that, though in India the proportion of expatriate staff never was very high. There is tremendous value in staff interchange, not only in institution building and for filling gaps in the staffing, but generally for the enrichment of academic life and as an experience for the individuals, who get to know a system different from their own.

In some of the more developed countries there has recently been great reluctance to accept academic staff from abroad who were seen as competing for increasingly scarce posts. It can be difficult to strike the right balance between local staff development and the institutions' freedom to recruit the best people.

There is a need for more genuine collegiality and equality in the staff exchange. At present, staff from the North are usually involved in responsible teaching and curriculum development in the South, whereas staff from the South tend to be attached to departments in the North with a rather undefined rôle. By the same token, most of the movement has been of students from the South going to the North, of teachers from the North going to the South, and of staff from the North acting as external examiners in the South.

To move from patronage to partnership, the balance needs to be redressed. The objective must be a diversification of flows. The host agencies in the developed countries need to put a lot more money into exchange and co-operation, and instead of being labelled 'aid', this should be on the education budget.

> *There is a need for more genuine collegiality and equality in the staff exchange*

The North-South flow of students should be encouraged, and strong financial support should be given for that. It might be advisable for the developing countries themselves to give some scholarships to students from the North. This may sound a hard suggestion, but might be appreciated as a token of goodwill and lead to stronger reciprocal support from the wealthy countries.

Generally, attitudes must change. The developed countries should recognize that they do derive benefits from having students and staff from abroad. The developing countries need to have more self-confidence and pride in what they have to offer, while the developed countries need to be more humble and recognize the expertise that exists outside industrialized countries. In a Commonwealth of equals we should all be wanting to learn and have genuine academic interchange with researchers and teachers in our partner countries.

Peter Williams concluded with the expression of his hope that in an increasingly international world some of these concerns might become redundant and nationality will in time become a much less significant factor in higher education.

► In discussion, the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP) was mentioned as a successful example of bilateral arrangements between all Commonwealth countries on an equal

basis. The total number of places, however, is still less than 1800 at any one time, and of these 900 are actually in Britain, 500 in Canada, and only 400 are provided by the rest of the Commonwealth. The developing countries ought to participate much more extensively in this scheme, as funds are available for awards if they apply for them.

However, there was contrary experience from Nigeria which offers thirty scholarship places a year to students from abroad, but finds there is not sufficient interest from abroad to fill them all, either with students from the North or from the South.

> *Programmes should be more flexible than they have been*

It was suggested that the CSFP has become unattractive because it has remained generally static in concept over its thirty years, and should be revitalised, for example by requiring that half of the people have to be women, or offering work-related opportunities in order to discourage often quite useless research.

Programmes should be more flexible than they have been. Opportunities should be provided for exchanges of a few months only, for summer schools, or courses, involving the private sector and non-governmental organisations.

A recent study found that many Africanists teaching at British universities today developed their special interest following a period of work at an African university in the sixties. As the supply of British academics for service in overseas universities has so greatly diminished, by the end of the century Britain will have very few academics with any immediate experience of the African continent at all.

Partnerships and Technology in Academic Learning

Judy Roberts concentrated her talk on the factors which need to be considered before building up a distance education programme.

Most people with experience in distance education, independent study correspondence courses, and open learning will agree that good open learning distance education programmes generally combine various technologies and methods, rather than using just one.

Distance education can be seen as having several components, starting with correspondence courses, print-based and distributed by mail. At a later stage, there were combinations of print, audio-cassette tapes, video tapes and computers, all basically tailored to individual study.

The use of telephones, either point to point or multi-point, i.e. as a kind of conference over the telephone, was a step towards interaction, as was the meeting of groups, for example to watch a video, listen to a tape, or have a tutorial.

The latest technology, involving satellites, fibre optics and computer networking, has brought about interactive media, introducing a whole new potential, at least technically. However, most learning packages still build in substantial print components to supplement the other media. Interaction can then be conducted either live over the telephone, through computers or even interactive television.

There is a great range of possible variations between individual and group work. One of the essential parts of distance education is to identify which combination of these components will work for a particular application.

1. The essence of distance learning is partnerships. Working in distance education involves building up partnerships at three levels.

Within the institution, content experts, instructional designers, adult learning theory experts, editors, media experts, and administrators all need to be involved in the course team as equal partners. Unlike classroom teaching, distance education is built on the idea that a team of people work together.

Still within the institution, it is essential that the sections providing support services, i.e. the registrar, the library, the print shop, the mail room, and the university administration acquire the skills necessary to deal with the different demands of distance education students. Libraries in particular face an entirely new set of problems with distance education because it increases the number of students wanting access to the material.

Within the country as well as *outside the country*, the importance lies with environmental strategic planning. The key factor is the definition of the application, which determines the use of technology and the particular set of partnerships and course team members.

In planning the strategy within the country one needs to consider:—

- economic trends within the country;
- demography of the country and the country the institution may work with;
- regulatory and policy issues. This concerns copyright, or regulations as to who may own the hardware: for example, audio-conference and distance education equipment may be the monopoly of the telephone company. As the regulatory environment differs from country to

country, systems tend to be not as easily transportable on a bilateral or multi-lateral basis as it might appear.

- corporate issues, i.e. the partners you may co-operate with. This might be a telephone or television company, or an industry which does a similar type of training.
- institutional, financial and technical issues also need to be analysed. Similarities and differences between and within countries need to be assessed.

2. Technology is inherently patronising to all of us. One reason is that the technical terms linked with technology, like any professional jargon, can be both intimidating and patronising.

Another way in which technology is patronising is that it requires us to behave in ways which may not be comfortable to us either as individuals or as cultures; technology tends to be obsessive-compulsive—checking the equipment continually to make sure it is working may require a behaviour change on the part of the individual.

Similarly, technology tends to expose our weaknesses. Presenting a paper on tape removes visual distractions, so that speech mannerisms, hesitations etc. become more irritating. On television, the problem extends to body language, which has to be very subdued, because television magnifies it.

> *People have to adapt to technology . . .*
> *it will not adapt to us*

Designers of a distance education programme must be prepared for the fact that teachers are likely to find using any technology a startling experience. People have to adapt to technology, because fundamentally it will not adapt to us.

3. Cost trends in technology are going down. The redesign of almost all technologies to take advantage of computer (digital) technology is resulting in lower hardware and transmission costs. For example, each new model of personal computer tends to be less expensive than its predecessor if no new features are added. Television signals that are digitised need less satellite space than the previous analogue generation of transmission. High technology is thus becoming cheaper.

However, software costs are rising as the result of factors such as higher salaries, copyright changes, etc. Whereas educational consortia were initially formed to share the hardware costs, they are now being developed to share the costs of developing distance education course software.

Because these trends could offset each other, it is important to analyse three components of a distance education system before concluding that it is cost-effective, namely the control centre, the transmission system and the remote site(s). (For the purpose of this analysis, course development expenses can be considered part of the cost of the transmission system.)

► In the subsequent discussion, it was pointed out that the distance between teacher and student in geographical terms is not as significant as the question whether the student, on encountering study problems, has a ready means of referring them to somebody who can give prompt help.

Interestingly, Canadian distance education institutions have found that they were catering for a very high proportion of students living in large metropolitan centres which already had a university, while they had originally set up their systems with the idea of serving the student remote from other institutions of higher education. The reasons for this may be that some individual learning styles or timetables are better served by distance education programmes.

From the educator's point of view, a great advantage in distance education is that the student is learning at his or her own pace, often more successfully than would have been possible in a campus setting.

Problems and Possibilities of New Partnerships

In his introduction to this panel session, **Anastasios Christodoulou** emphasized that imaginative and bold thinking is what is needed, rather than a feeling of oppression about the size of the problem.

> *Imaginative and bold thinking is needed*

The Commonwealth of Learning is an example of what positive thinking can achieve, although it is only one element of an imaginative plan, put together at the fifth Meeting for Commonwealth Higher Education Co-operation and Collaboration of the Standing Committee on Student Mobility. The implementation of that plan would require the creation of a Commonwealth higher education fund, with £15 million annually deployed multilaterally across the Commonwealth as a whole. The idea was generally welcomed and endorsed in principle but no money was granted.

This new Commonwealth fund for higher education co-operation was to be a mechanism for promoting various aspects of institutional

development within the Commonwealth, and as one whose specific purposes would include:—

- institution building through staff development, improved management systems, stronger libraries and data processing facilities
- assistance to national efforts in upgrading centres of specialisation, called centres of advanced studies and research
- the introduction of new technologies to assist research, teaching and administration, to link universities, colleges and research institutes more directly and to enhance their capabilities for reaching new groups of learners
- the creation and sustenance of networks of scholars within the Commonwealth through the establishment of new links between institutions and departments, the exchange of staff and collaborative research, and more effective ways of using existing networks (non-governmental as well as official)
- the promotion of more South-South and North-South flows of scholars.

The purpose of the fund was not to substitute for national efforts nor for bilateral aid, and therefore was in no sense to be construed as competing with existing aid agencies. It was rather seen as complementing existing activities and making possible programmes which almost by definition were beyond the scope of a bilateral approach.

It was seen as enabling developing member countries of the Commonwealth to avail themselves of many of the advantages particularly associated with a multilateral framework of joined and shared endeavour, helping them to draw on a wider range of experience than any single donor possessed, to extend the range of sources on which they could draw for books, equipment, training, and expertise.

These ideas were formulated three years ago, and if anything, the problems have in fact grown even larger and the challenges have become more pressing.

Australia

Ken Back described Australia's situation, outlining both its policies regarding fees and measures taken to cut down on the cost of higher education to the Government incurred by students individually.

At present there are three categories of overseas students in Australia: so-called subsidized students, i.e. private students who pay a fee covering part of the actual cost of a place; students who are fully sponsored by the Australian government; and full fee students.

Australia sees its rôle firmly in Asia and the Pacific

The subsidized scheme for private students will be phased out from 1990 in favour of the new Equity and Merit Scholarship Scheme (EMSS), the value of which in financial terms will be the same as that of the subsidised programme. Students make direct applications for the scholarships, which will provide fees for travel and living as well as all fees for courses.

Australia sees its rôle firmly in Asia and the Pacific, and aid partnerships include Commonwealth countries but are not confined to them. The scholarships available to foreign students will cater mainly for students from Asia and the Pacific (95%), but also from Africa. Until 1992 intakes will be all in higher education; later they may extend into other sectors. 50% of the new scholarships will be for women, and the target numbers of scholarships under the scheme will be about 600 in 1990, 1,400 in 1991, and 2,000 in 1992.

The Government has also introduced a new postgraduate research scholarship scheme under which provision is made for fee-only scholarships for postgraduate students from developed countries, with a target of about 110 in 1990, going up to 250 in 1992.

It had been said that education had become a new commodity for trade in many countries. Australia has firmly established its policy for the export of education services, which has led to criticism both within Australia and outside. The response in Australia has been to curb too aggressive marketing and the actions of less reputable commercial agents. A code of ethical practice and guidelines for higher education institutions has been developed, and the government has established a code of conduct which covers all educational institutions.

The current challenge is to find ways in which access can be increased and cost reduced. One significant factor is the number of overseas students who either take too much time to complete their courses or do not complete them at all. Anything to improve the success rate in those terms is going to have a marked effect on the reduction of cost.

For that purpose Australia has introduced a range of bridging programmes. They are targeted at the English language where necessary, at academic standards, bridging the gap between the achievement at school or post-secondary training and the requirement to enter into the normal stream of Australian study, and at social and cultural adjustment. There are several models for different countries and different subjects. The bridging programmes have proved to be highly successful.

Other arrangements to cut study costs involve various forms of twinning arrangements whereby the course is taken partly in the developing country and then completed in a developed country, the degree usually being awarded by the latter, although there are now also joint ventures with the degree awarded by the institutions in both countries.

Ken Back ended by expressing his conviction that the 1990's will see the appropriate balance between trade, educational, social and cultural considerations in providing education opportunities for foreign students.

Zambia

The situation in higher education must be viewed in the context of declining economies, said **Ben Mweene**. Countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, in varying degrees, go through a severe economic crisis, characterised by crippling external debt, scarcity of foreign exchange, rising inflation, food shortages, scarcity of drugs, and generally rising levels of poverty and human deprivation.

> *The situation in higher education must be viewed in the context of declining economies*

When links first started, most of the universities in the South were new, and the older universities in the North helped them develop and establish new departments. It had been hoped that within the foreseeable future these new departments would be able to stand on their own feet and genuine partnership, a kind of symbiosis would begin with both partners benefitiag. But the economic climate in these countries changed in the mid 1970s and the prospects of genuine partnership are beginning to fade.

What African universities need from partnership is no longer just people as in the days when links were first established. They need books, journals, laboratory equipment etc. This means, thought Ben Mweene, that rather than moving from patronage to partnership the trend has been towards accentuated patronage.

He named five points to be considered for future arrangements:

1. *Aid projects must be long-term and development-orientated.* The development of a country is a process which takes decades, but the time scale of current projects is usually three to five years, which is far too short.

2. *All partners involved must accept that partnership should have a strong aid element.* The term 'partnership' for the relationship between the poor and the rich countries is a polite euphemism from which nobody will benefit. It would make for a more clear-cut and realistic assessment of the situation if it were openly stated that the wealthy countries assist the poor.

3. *Northern partners should employ academic staff from the South and pay them regular salaries.* Southern universities often cannot retain local staff, largely because local salaries are so low. The opportunity to earn a hard currency salary for a limited time through a teaching contract at a university in a developed country (instead of an attachment) would act as a motivation to academics and prevent them from leaving the country for good.

4. *Actual cash should be made available to poor universities by Northern partners.* Currently aid is given in the form of people, books, and sometimes equipment. However, experience at any university shows that it would be useful to have a grant to be used on needs which are not anticipated and problems which need a quick solution.

5. *Scholarships for study abroad should be reduced in favour of strengthening local institutions.* There is a lot of merit in giving scholarships for study abroad, which is a very valuable experience. However, it may well drain local departments, and it would be helpful if part of the funds provided for overseas scholarships were to be spent developing departmental capabilities in universities in the poor countries.

► In discussion the desirability of easy and unbureaucratic help was acknowledged; however, organisations in the developed countries are very strictly accountable for the ways in which public money is spent, which inevitably makes the process of giving funds less flexible.

The Conference: An Overview

Speaking from the perspective of the developing world, **Gower Rizvi** recapitulated some of the major points that had emerged from the conference. He was particularly concerned that much of the discussion was very much culture bound, reflecting the concerns, problems and views of the developed world with little objective understanding of the needs of the developing societies.

While it is true that higher education in the North is in a crisis, the nature and magnitude of the crisis in the developing countries is of a different order. It is not merely a question of fighting against a few redundancies or making some savings, but whether institutions of higher education would survive and continue to play their rôle. The threat is real. Having been bypassed by the industrial revolution, the developing countries are anxious not to miss out again—the revolution of knowledge brought about by information technology. Thus the challenge is

both to make higher education accessible to the developing countries, and to do so within the limits of constrained resources.

The World Bank's report on education—which cannot be ignored because it does influence policies of both the donors and the recipients—was replete with contradictions: it complains of overproduction of graduates as well as the dearth of well qualified personnel and the inability of the universities to absorb the large number of students demanding higher education. Nor is there any justification in its claim that higher education in developing countries is not cost effective. The comparison with developed countries is misleading as the universities in the developing countries not only have to provide teaching facilities, but also the infrastructure which makes it possible to run a university. To suggest that universities ought to privatize services like accommodation, catering, and health is to argue that education should be limited to those who can afford it.

The universities are used to meeting the changing demands. The problem now is to adjust from mass primary and secondary education to mass higher education within the constraints of diminishing resources.

The Secretary-General of the ACU had put a finger on the problem, said Gower Rizvi, by reminding the conference that one must not be overwhelmed by resource constraints, but instead be bold and imaginative. That higher education could be innovative even in financially constrained circumstances was proved by examples like India which is coping with the demand for higher education and producing students, many of whom are as good as in any other country. The other great innovation is The Commonwealth of Learning.

While study and academic work abroad have obvious advantages, and scholarships for that purpose are useful, we need to consider whether they are the best use of resources. It had been argued with some justification that bringing scholars from developing countries to universities in the North is more beneficial to the host societies than to the sending countries (not to mention the problems of brain drain). Instead it would make much more sense to transfer the resources to developing universities so that they could improve the facilities for their students, including hiring foreign expertise.

It would make sense to strengthen the centres of excellence already existing in the developing countries and encourage student mobility among them; resources in developing countries should be maximized through rationalization, avoidance of duplication and above all through regional networking. (The ACU and the Commonwealth Secretariat might consider training schemes for university administrators.)

Universities in the North could offer sabbatical and leave vacancy appointments to scholars from the South and also encourage their own members to spend their sabbaticals there. Funds should be made available for co-operation between South-South universities. And last but not least the donors should persuade the recipient governments to increase their own contribution to educational development by culling of wasteful expenditure like defence.

[Editorial note: Major points which emerged in discussion groups were taken up by Gowher Rizvi. Outline summaries have been produced of the work of these discussion groups and are available on request.]

Looking to the Future

Alister McIntyre recapitulated the general acknowledgement that universities, both in developed and developing countries, need to adapt both their programmes and methods of work to the constraints on public expenditure, which are likely to continue in the foreseeable future.

There has been a public relations failure on the part of the universities, which have tended to feel that their importance was self-evident. There is a critical need to narrow and if possible to close the communications gap between the universities on the one hand and the public and private sectors on the other.

Universities have to learn to market their products better. This does not imply complete subordination of the work of universities to manpower planning by the private and public sectors, but rather that by paying attention to those expressed needs they gain room to manoeuvre. For university administrators the first lesson to be drawn from this is that they have to be better managers. Many institutions have tended in the past to regard management as low priority and to relegate it principally to those who got stuck on the academic ladder.

Universities have to learn to market their products better

Fortunately, they are now treating the management function more seriously and are applying rigorous criteria to their administrative staff.

The managers of today must understand the social and economic milieu in which they are operating, have a capacity to interact with governments and leaders in the different sectors of the community, and show a sensitivity to academic values as well as an ability to sustain a dialogue with staff and students. They must give leadership in planning and organising the outputs of the university in as cost-

effective a manner as possible, and promote their optimal use by the community, diversify the sources of finance for the university's operations, and broaden the base of its clientele.

Many of the difficulties presently facing the universities derive from an insufficient definition of their place in the overall system of tertiary education. Today they have to recognize that in the field of higher education they no longer have a monopoly over learning, nor can they stand aloof from other institutions in the tertiary system which train rather than educate.

In any event, the dichotomy between education and training is no longer as sharp as was once thought. For one thing, information technology and flexible learning systems are making it possible to envisage a continuum of education. Continuing education has become a very important component of higher education, and with that the walls between universities and technical and vocational institutions are beginning to crumble.

The dichotomy between education and training is no longer as sharp as was once thought

Universities therefore have to become more outward looking and forge a new alliance with the rest of the tertiary system, which recognizes their comparative advantage in reflection and innovative work, while at the same time acknowledging their interdependence with skill-specific training institutions. This has considerable potential for mutual benefits and can make both sets of institutions stronger and more resilient to public scrutiny.

The universities also have to take an explicit interest in the quality of teaching at the secondary and primary levels. Poor preparation for entrance to university, especially in the English language, and in some countries mathematics and the sciences, reflect chronic weaknesses in the secondary and primary systems. In order to avoid too heavy a load of remedial work in the universities, which would reduce capacities for teaching and research, better preparation for secondary and primary teachers must be ensured.

Although there are anxieties concerning the overproduction of graduates, especially in the arts, demographic pressures in many countries, certainly in the Caribbean, push inexorably for an expansion of access in fields such as science and technology.

Universities have to utilize the existing capacity to its full potential. This means among other things trying to achieve year-round utilization of facilities through comprehensive evening and summer programmes and to develop self-study programmes to minimize the amount of time that students need to stay on campus.

Concern had been expressed about declining academic standards. While there is no concrete evidence on the subject, there is worry about the situation in science and technology. Where the supply of crucial imported materials and equipment has dried up, there is clearly a case for limiting student intakes (despite pressure to do otherwise). Twinning arrangements with universities in developed countries might be used to help shortages.

In the final analysis one's ability to explore all of these avenues tends to depend on one's academic standing and related contacts in the outside world. Universities that retain good quality staff often find that they can circumvent the difficulties of limited resources.

Morale of staff in poor countries might be improved by measures such as facilitating attendance at professional meetings as well as the provision of travel grants and research support services. Universities in developed countries could also co-operate by sending on graduate students and staff who could contribute to teaching and collaborative research.

The conference had raised the question whether it is not common interest rather than simply the North/South divide which constitutes the basic rationale for co-operation in the future.

While there may be a case for continuing some degree of patronage by developed countries to developing country universities, on the whole partnership rather than patronage will probably become increasingly the basis for co-operation.

Alister McIntyre concluded with the expression of his hope that a conference which had helped to identify an initial agenda of issues would lead to the beginning of new initiatives and new efforts.

► Discussion concentrated on problems of funding. The provision of discretionary funds in foreign currencies for unforeseen needs is difficult, as resources tend to be tied to clearly defined projects. It would help if project preparation were more rigorous, reducing 'unforeseen needs' to a minimum. However, greater flexibility on the part of the donors would be helpful. This also applies to the funding of regional projects, which are often neglected.

The necessity for co-operation among the developing countries themselves was reiterated, and it was stressed that efforts should be made within all structures, such as the Commonwealth or the ACP countries, to promote linkages and interdependence between the institutions of higher education.

Conference report by Christa Veile

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